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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006161

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2005

TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRIME MINISTER VAJPAYEE'S SEPTEMBER 16-19  
VISIT TO TURKEY

(U) Classified by Political Counselor John Kunstadter, E.O.  
12958, reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Indian PM Vajpayee visited Turkey September 16-19, the first visit by an Indian PM in 15 years. Vajpayee spent September 17 in Ankara, meeting with GOT officials including PM Erdogan and FM Gul. Vajpayee went to Istanbul on September 18, meeting with business leaders and Turkish President Sezer.
12. (C) According to a September 30 readout of the visit from Turkish MFA South Asia Acting Department Head Ergin Soner, Vajpayee came with a small delegation (about ten) including only one minister, the Minister for Trade and Industry. Soner said Turkey was increasingly drawn to India's billion-person market, while India viewed Turkey as a gateway to the EU market.
13. (C) On Iraq, Soner said Vajpayee told Erdogan "openly and clearly" that India would "never, never" send troops to Iraq absent a UN resolution (Soner served as translator for the Vajpayee-Erdogan meeting). Erdogan told Vajpayee that although Turkey had not decided whether to send troops, a UN resolution would be useful but Turkey did not view it as a necessary.
14. (C) On terrorism, Soner claimed the two countries agreed "100%," which he attributed to the fact that both nations had a history of having to fight against terrorists. During Vajpayee's visit, Turkey and India signed an agreement to establish a joint foreign ministry working group on international terrorism. Soner said Vajpayee raised the issue of cross-border terrorism in Kashmir, without, however, mentioning Kashmir by name. Erdogan took Vajpayee's point, also without mentioning Kashmir. Soner said the GOT wanted to be very careful on its Kashmir stance "or else we will lose Pakistan." Soner said that although the MFA had prepared talking points for Erdogan on India-Pakistan relations in general, neither Erdogan nor Vajpayee raised the issue. Likewise, neither raised the subject of nuclear arms, Soner claimed.
15. (C) Soner described Vajpayee as frail and needing assistance to walk, comparing his health status to that of former Turkish PM Ecevit, who suffered severely from Parkinson's disease while in office.

16. (U) Lahore and Peshawar minimize considered.  
EDELMAN